A three day holiday follows Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, during which there are great celebrations and much visiting of neighbours to wish them "Eid-Kum Mubarak" (Happy Holiday), the answer to which is "Aadana Allah Ala Amthaleh." On the Eid the Ruler receives visitors at the Palace. The Eid is particularly colourful owing to the bright new clothes which are worn by the children. The boys wear new white thobes and bright-coloured silk caps and the girls proudly appear in gold-decorated dresses. In many cases small boys go calling with their parents, eagerly clutching handfuls of sweets as they leave their various hosts. Local bands, composed of the negro inhabitants of Bahrain, pass through the streets of the towns and villages playing tunes on their locally made instruments. These include many types of drums, flutes, lutes and a local form of bagpipe made from the stomach of a sheep. As the bands of players go from house to house they are tipped by the owners, who often, if they are wealthy, provide a meal for the musicians.

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[534]

NEW YEAR'S DAY

It is the custom in Bahrain on New Year's Day of the Christian Calendar for groups of Bahrainis of African origin to form into bands and go playing through the streets of Manama. These men, who to day are the same as all other Bahrainis, are descended from freed slaves or were themselves slaves who escaped to Bahrain and were manumitted. In gratitude for their freedom they thus celebrate New Year's Day. They play first at H.B.M.'s Political Agency and the Adviserate and on leaving these places they split up into smaller parties to serenade their friends. Around Bahrain flags, borne by the leaders of the musicians, these people, both men and women, dance steps and play the music which was brought many centuries ago to Bahrain by their African ancestors. In the music to which they dance the rhythm of the drum plays an important part, but to a European it may seem strange that the drummers frequently leave off playing whenever they feel tired, or if they want to talk to a friend or drink a cup of tea or coffee, and when the distraction is over they again join the band.

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It has occasionally been stated in newspapers and even recently in a book on Bahrain by some one who should know better that slavery still exists not only in the Persian Gulf but also in Bahrain. The celebrations of these Bahrainis at their freedom are proof enough that in Bahrain at least slavery is a thing of the past.

[567]

THE HAJJ

The Hajj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which, according to his religion, every Moslem who is able to do so must perform once at least during his lifetime. The pilgrimage takes place during the month of Dhul Hajj. The pilgrims, many of whom have reached Mecca by most hazardous routes, wearing the two white unseamed garments that are mandatory, perform the various rites of the ceremony which includes the circumambulation of the Kaaba, pilgrimages and visits

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